

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 26, 2019

Those present at 7:00 p.m.:

Presiding:	Mayor Polly Sierer Deputy Mayor Stu Markham District 1, Mark Morehead District 2, Jerry Clifton District 3, Jen Wallace District 4, Chris Hamilton District 5, Jason Lawhorn
Staff Members:	City Manager Tom Coleman Acting City Secretary Tara Schiano City Solicitor Paul Bilodeau Planning and Development Director Mary Ellen Gray Planning and Development Planner Mike Fortner Planning and Development Administrative Professional I Michelle Vispi Parking Division Manager Marvin Howard Parking Division Supervisor Courtney Mulvanity Public Works and Water Resources GIS Technician Jay Hodny

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1. Ms. Sierer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
 2. Ms. Sierer stated the purpose for the meeting was to discuss the Parking Subcommittee parking strategy, staff technical review, an implementation plan and review additional information. The audience was requested to remain on task and focus on information presented.

Ms. Sierer introduced State Representative Paul Baumbach. Mr. Baumbach asked for Ms. Sierer to join him on the floor. Representative Baumbach presented a tribute to Mayor Sierer from The State of Delaware General Assembly.

Mr. Coleman stated staff developed an implementation plan for the Parking Subcommittee's parking strategy which Council endorsed in 2018 and the goal was to move forward with the plan. Staff would show how they minimize the impact to the downtown parking as part of the Main Street reconstruction project. A special meeting to discuss this topic was scheduled for April 29th, 2019 where staff would present a variety of options to increase the on-street parking inventory and potentially modify the management strategies for some of the off-street lots. Some options were intended to be temporary such as a conversion of the bike line on Delaware Avenue to on-street parking. It could help address the large loss of on-street parking during the Main Street project and help support some of the Main Street businesses.

Possible permanent changes could be metering additional side streets and modify similar downtown residential parking districts. Information would also be presented about multi-space metering solution which would allow the new on-street parking to be quick and cost effective. Representatives from T2 (a company which deals with parking technology example parking kiosks) could provide additional information on their system and to answer Council's questions. Staff felt that there were benefits to move to the multi-space metering system and would discuss it later in the meeting. Mr. Coleman added the approval of the Green Mansion project would impact Lot 3. The recommendations, strategies and implementation plan focused on Lot 3. More information would be available after a meeting with the developer to create a more developed strategy to deal with Lot 3.

Ms. Gray stated the presentation was modified from the January meeting with the new version being streamlined. On June 25, 2018, Council approved the strategy and policy matrix that the Parking Subcommittee developed. Staff was directed to put together a technical report and implementation plan to include prioritization, cost analysis and timeline of what has been named "The Parking Policy Matrix".

Ms. Gray said that staff would provide some background since there was a gap in time from the presentation of the original parking strategy to the present. Mr. McIntosh, the Chair of the Parking Subcommittee, also the Planning Commissioner and retired President of the Junior Achievement of Delaware would speak about the Parking Subcommittee process. Mr. Fortner would review the staff technical analysis and Ms. Gray would finish with the parking policy matrix.

Mr. McIntosh stated the plan which was approved in June of 2018 considered information obtained in the past and was applied to the current thinking around parking. The committee was made up of individuals who represented all of the various pieces of the parking puzzle in the community as follows:

- Richard Rind represented the University of Delaware; oversees parking at the University
- Lee Mikles represented businesses; owner of Grain Craft Bar and Kitchen
- Rob Cappiello represented the non-profit sector; business manager for the United Methodist Church
- Chris Locke General Council and Partner, Lang Development
- Jordan Abadu a student who represented the students of University of Delaware
- Will Hurd and Alan Silverman were with the Planning Commission
- City of Newark staff Planning Department, Parking Department and GIS

A special effort was made to hold open meetings to involve citizens in the community by having discussions with them. There were no public comments because they were already part of what they committee was doing. The committee tried to be as transparent as possible.

The Planning Department believed that that Parking Committee reported recommendations that kept with the needs of the City and encompassed parking solutions for cities of the same size. The timeline shown earlier outlined near-term, mid-term and beyond to illustrate the project's evolution. It has also provided a learning opportunity as the project continued to move forward. Adjustments could be made in real time. The plan anticipates changing over time as better practices come to light. Mr. McIntosh stated the committee had been very active for a long time and staff had been supportive in their needs and the needs of the City.

Mr. Fortner presented the analytical analysis of their report, "A Bold Future." The report was broken down to provide a background, a brief history, the process and an inventory of parking downtown. Part 2 outlined the visions and strategic issues. This was something the Parking Subcommittee established early in the process. There were strategic issues the committee tried to address during their series of meetings. Mr. Fortner tried to align them with the best practices and the planning profession latest research which was explained in the report. He wanted to focus on Part 3, The Policy Layers. The committee came up with several solutions to address the parking situation in Newark in three categories:

- Policy Layers – managing the existing parking supply; how to best manage the existing resources would be the first step
- Evaluating Demand – how to plan for parking and encourage parking
- Opportunities – how to increase access and expand parking

Mr. Fortner explained the topic was important and needed to be addressed by the Planning Commission Subcommittee. The existing regulations from the original presentation were designed as a "Suburban Style" created by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. As a general guide, assumptions were made based on a suburban type of model which does not take into consideration the availability of any other forms of transportation and assumes peak rates. This meant the hypothesis was based on information which would have shown the maximum capacity for parking to provide parking for all the business at the same time on the same day.

Mr. Fortner stated many of the assumptions did not align with Newark's Downtown where people walk, bike, use transit or any shared use type of transportation to get downtown. In communities like Newark and throughout urban areas in the United States, it was calculated that there were 3.4 parking spaces per vehicle. Parking requirements, the first thing that land use needs to be met:

- Determine of Urban form
- How the community looks
- Most parking only has a singular role which does not allow for any other form of usage

- Cause more parking to be built than what a developer would otherwise have provided

Mr. Fortner presented an aerial photo of Newark's Downtown which was considered the towns urban area with mixed use shared with everything valued in a community. In urban and suburban areas, more land has been designated to parking than any other land use. The research showed many communities across the country have reviewed their parking requirements to reevaluate them. Across the board, the recommendations the Parking Subcommittee has made have been consistent with the best planning practices available. Communities have started to realize the need to change their dialogue from "How can we get enough parking?" to "How can parking be planned, provided and managed in a way to make a city thrive?" Each of the Planning Subcommittee has a series of solutions which were based on managing the existing parking supply, evaluation of demand or increased access to parking.

Mr. Fortner explained that the short-term phase consisted of several parts:

- Parking Wayfinding signage in real time which has already been implemented to show the location of public lots and available spaces; a recommendation was to provide a digital board to list all lots with the available spaces per lot to be located at strategic places such as Main Street and Delaware Avenue to help driver's plan their route as they enter the downtown area
- Linking GIS to "real-time" parking; the City's website to availability and updates every minute; this could be viewed by using a cell phone
- Negotiating lease agreements with the University – agreements would allow use of UD parking lots during off peak hours;
- UD had a program, not widely known, where off peak passes could be purchased at a rate of \$95 per year and the committee saw this as a solution to help with employee parking as well as freeing up "premium" parking closer to downtown; this could be advertised and promoted
- Review of current Zoning Code – this would be to identify impediments to not create a code that would contradict other language in the code; the process would be a public process with the Planning Commission and then to Council to revise the Zoning Code that would go through its own process which could take up to a month to develop
- Wayfinding marketing – to help people understand the parking situation downtown with videos; with the assistance of a consultant to help design advertisements

Mr. Fortner continued to the medium-term, Phase 2 and advised Council they would agree to have staff continue to work out issues where solutions would later be brought forward to Council:

- "Smart" Downtown App – the committee recommended the development for a smart phone application as large cities have created their own applications
- Various applications were available, some parking applications provide the ability to reserve a parking spot and connects to a directional application to find the location
- The City could coordinate with the applications to possibly provide more live stream information
- Modernize the City Zoning Code – the Planning Commission would hold hearings on the proposals then the plan would be presented to Council
- "Decoupling" apartments – in general 2 to 3 parking spaces get assigned to on apartment; the current Zoning Code provides an incentive to students to bring their cars because the parking would already have been paid for through rent; "decoupling" would create a cost to park
- "Dynamic" Fee Structure – the recommendation in the plan suggested how to make a market for parking and have it market rate based
- Negotiate lease agreements – this would be an expansion of existing parking; businesses utilize adjacent lots however, after hours lots remain vacant
- Marketing Strategy – the education of residents of the benefits of changed zoning requirements, lower parking requirements and encourage biking or downtown transit

Long-term, Phase 3:

- Increase/Promote transit use – included in the operation of the internal downtown circular bus route; Newark TRiP (Transit Improvement Partnership - a

partnership between the City of Newark, DART, University of Delaware, Cecil County Transit and WILMAPCO) to has looked at the City's transit providers to find ways to better coordinate for a better downtown environment; to have its own effective bus route it would need to operate frequently with direct routes and little wait time

- Central Parking Garage – the report does not recommend a parking garage downtown however, there were benefits to a garage versus surface lots; a parking garage would have to be part of an overall strategy some have been built with a later purpose for if the space would no longer be needed of parking (i.e. converted into apartments)

Ms. Gray presented the Parking Subcommittee's vision which encompassed strategies and staff's implementation as a holistic and integrated plan. It touched upon the effective management of current parking supplies, a people-oriented community design and a cultural shift in terms of the way parking has been thought of when people move around downtown. This approach aligns and advances the three main elements of the vision to Newark's comprehensive plan which was to show a healthy, active, sustainable and inclusive community. The vision supported policies of:

- Bicycle and pedestrian accessible, safety
- "Complete Streets" to support all transportation options
- Compact and mixed-use development for a pedestrian friendly environment
- Access to transit and other transportation modes
- High air and water quality as well as watershed protection
- Preservation of historical resources
- Range of housing choices and affordability levels

Ms. Gray noted that the approval of the Parking Policy Matrix did not approve any changes to zoning ordinances or approved funding. It would allow the process to begin. Funding would be a separate approval through the budget process whereby the 2019 funding had already been approved. Future budget expenditures would need to be reviewed and approved by Council during the budget process. Any changes to the parking ordinance, which was proposed, would be a two-step, two-year process. All related ordinances would be brought back to the Planning Commission for recommendations and to Council for further consideration.

The Parking Subcommittee Strategy, which was approved by Council on June 25th, 2018, set a new way to look at parking in the City. The matrix established a path to follow with the plan being based on the latest research and solid planning principals. Staff worked and analyzed the strategy, worked out details from the Parking Subcommittee. The Parking Policy Matrix was feasible, and staff was ready to move forward.

Ms. Gray felt this plan should be given the opportunity, resources and time needed to bring it to action. Ms. Gray asked the Council to approve the Parking Policy Matrix timeline, the cost as presented as well as direct staff to move forward with implementation.

Mr. Lawhorn appreciated all the work which went into the presentation and knowledge the length of time that had passed to have a well thought out process. He wanted to support the staff, experts and volunteers who worked to put the plan together. Mr. Lawhorn wanted to address Phase 1. As some parts of the plan have been implemented already such as Wayfinding signs and linking to GIS in real time. He had used it online and thought there may have been some issues to work out however, it still worked well enough to review parking spots available City wide. The marketing strategy short-term was to promote parts of the plan already implemented such as education and promotion of parking options. There was money in the budget to hire a marketing consultant. Ms. Gray stated that when the matrix was created it was done with the idea to start in January. The timeline would be closer to mid-2019 to 2020. Mr. Lawhorn verified that the consultant would research updating the Zoning Code as well as research the public process in an effort for the City to understand what needed to be done before actual work was to begin. Ms. Gray agreed with his statement.

Mr. Lawhorn asked if the City was still engaged in talks with the University regarding negotiating the leasing agreements with the University parking lots. Ms. Gray stated that the City has had ongoing discussions with the University. Mr. Lawhorn wanted to make sure that it would be something the City would see sooner rather than later, and Ms. Gray assured him it would be incorporated into the marketing strategy.

Mr. Lawhorn wanted to know the difference between the review of City Zoning Code to identify impediments to creative parking solutions and if they were different line items under the same consultant because he read it as there would be an update to the Zoning Code as well as research and public process of the Zoning Code modernization. Ms. Gray explained that there were two aspects related to parking relative to the Zoning Code. Updating the Zoning Code refers to the City's parking regulations and the second component referred to independent private lots. Currently the City's ordinances do not permit the committee to have those changed to manage the issue.

Mr. Lawhorn agreed with the idea to partner with a preexisting application it may not be cost effective to create one. Ms. Gray added staff had several options which ranged from creating one in-house, or to use an "off the shelf" already created application or create a new application. Another option was to have interactivity with the University and their parking application. The goal would be to have it all integrated. Mr. Lawhorn questioned the statement that University already had a parking application and it was verified by Ms. Olsen through Ms. Gray. It would be then integrated with T2 software that would take some search to find the best path.

Mr. Lawhorn continued with the shift of the marketing strategy to 2020 with a total of current funds and now next year with the focus to change the perception from "not enough parking available" to "enough parking available". He felt that it would be one of the item parts of the plan to do smart things to help the City get a better answer to the question and Ms. Gray agreed.

Mr. Lawhorn addressed the "decoupling" recommendation. He understood the concept but questioned if the spots would become City lots or change the code when developers build with parking to make it a requirement for them to charge for parking separately. Ms. Gray stated this would entail having the research to help work out the details. There were a couple of options where the City would require "decoupling", or the City could make it an incentive like a density bonus for landlords or developers who "decouple" their parking. Mr. Lawhorn said then this was more of goal, but the path forward was not clear yet, Ms. Gray agreed. Ms. Gray reiterated that right now parking was required to be provided in conjunction with multifamily. The incentive to bring a car exists and the thought was what the City could create policies to have students not bring cars. Also, would speak to affordable housing because if a development could be built without the need to factor in the cost of parking there would be lower development costs where in theory it could be related to rent.

Mr. Lawhorn verified that the "Dynamic Fee Structure" idea would not happen until next year so there should not be an expectation during the next budget meeting the increased parking rates. Ms. Gray stated staff may review increased parking rates for the current year, but the "Dynamic" parking rates were more about rates to be used to incentivize and target parking in certain areas. The example provided was to have a higher rate of parking at certain times in certain areas where parking was more desirable and try to encourage a turnover of that street. It tied to increased parking rates but more of a subset of. Mr. Lawhorn stated that they were either similar or not. "Dynamic" would be done this year but there may be a separate conversation about increased parking rates this year. Ms. Gray stated it was possible and might be part of the April 29, 2019 conversation or in the future. Mr. Lawhorn asked if that was how everyone wanted it handled. Mr. Coleman stated it was part of a larger discussion about how many of the private lots have started to charge \$2 and the University charged \$2.

Mr. Coleman added that they had brought forth a lesser dynamic rate structure a year or so ago where it was seasonal as opposed a cost change throughout the day and he did not want to rule anything out at this point. Mr. Lawhorn stated that this was not part of this plan, but it was something that could be brought up independently. Ms. Gray added where parking demand was less then it could be possible to lower the price and maybe change the price throughout the day which was where the software would come in. Mr. Lawhorn stated he understood and agreed with the concept of "Dynamic Parking," but noted it was something that came up in the budget discussions last year. He believed there was an expectation for it to be done last year however, it did not occur. For both options it was something he had not seen in either plan and he wanted to keep bringing it up. Mr. Lawhorn was not against either option, but the thought was for working professionals on Main Street. When the meeting happened a year prior many of the professionals spoke out to state if they were to pay \$1 per hour for parking during a 40 to 50 hour work week it would be \$2,500 and that was affordable. But if it were increased to \$2 per hour then they would pay \$4,000 to \$6,000 a year which would not be affordable. Mr. Coleman stated that discussion would occur happen during the next scheduled special meeting. Ms. Gray explained that as part of this plan, as Mr. McIntosh mentioned in his presentation, they were working with the University for employee parking in the evening. Other things could be looked at to manage the current parking inventory, permit lots and other strategy issues to report on to encourage and incentivize fulltime employees to park further away and leave desirable parking for customers. Mr. Lawhorn noted that money for the parking mobile

application and a parking consultant to carry out the code changes were in the 2020 budget; Ms. Gray agreed the Planning Department did not have the current resources to perform the task.

Mr. Lawhorn talked about the internal circular bus route and asked if staff looked to Newark TRiP and other agencies to provide the information. Ms. Gray advised that the study was not to establish a circular bus route for downtown parking. The first step would be to coordinate the four bus systems that operate within the City. At the last meeting, it was discussed how to obtain other resources. DART had an application on bus schedules and coordinated with other applications. It touched upon how the City could utilize the resources provided to help develop a circular bus route in conjunction or in parallel to. Mr. Lawhorn asked if the expectation was to be done by 2021. Ms. Gray confirmed this and noted the study had concluded, and the recommendations would be presented later. The group had looked at in Phase 2 to obtain additional funding from WILMAPCO.

Mr. Lawhorn wanted to discuss the centrally located downtown parking garage as some people believed there to be plenty of parking and some people the locations were not easy to find. Mr. Lawhorn believed the data would be collected over the next two year would help the City figure out if this was the necessary path forward.

Mr. Lawhorn asked if the GIS was a database for the City to find out detailed analysis on peak times, down times, which lots fill first and other information, and was the data available. Mr. Mulvanity advised that the data was not on GIS alone there were multiple systems used to log the information. On street parking meter data would be the IPS system, off-street parking would be on parking logics through the countdown signs and using the T2 Flex through Enforcement. All those databases would need to be used in conjunction with each other to compile any data. GIS simply helps to display the information privately or publicly. Mr. Lawhorn stated he was trying to look ahead in 2019 to decide that in 2020 he would like to have staff bring a recommendation with all the data to help cut out people's opinions.

Mr. Coleman stated staff did to provide the on-street parking meter occupancy report. Mr. Mulvanity stated it began in early 2018 and was provided for about a year and a half. It had not changed and did not tackle the problem of off-street parking lots. Staff started to look at with parking logics and putting the data together. Mr. Lawhorn wanted data from analysis, planners and engineers to put together with recommendations supported by the data to show an accurately show the activity in the parking lots over two-year time frame. Mr. Mulvanity stated it could be done.

Mr. Clifton felt his offered his full support of the plan. He noted there was a lot of information provided on line including several reports that spoke of parking and particularly "decoupling" parking. He believed it was an interesting observation to that a two-bedroom apartment which is generally 900 to 950 square feet is required to have two parking spaces of that square footage, 488 square feet consists of the required parking. The one take away he had from the reports was that the towns referenced had good transportation systems. He reported he has always supported the Unicity bus as a great system which did not cost a lot and it serves a purpose. Former Mayor Funk supported the trolley that looped the City and with that the discussion to expand parking. An equal component would be to reduce the need for parking by walking and biking but that was not always feasible during the cold seasons. The component he felt that needed reviews was the transportation systems on Friday and Saturday nights for the local communities. Mr. Clifton felt that there was a very qualifiable way to cover the outlying residential communities in an hour and a half loop. People who came out on the night of the restaurant hearing were generally residents of the City of Newark. The question was how many of those residents if they had a good reliable transportation on Friday and Saturday nights would be amenable to walking to the end of their development and actually use that type of transportation where they did not have to drive. It would allow them to relax and enjoy themselves and it would take less parking spaces to do it. The key component was to be aware of the City's demographics when looking at viable transportation options such as trolleys provided by DART. Mr. Clifton looked at trolleys at a transportation conference in Atlantic City a few years prior and the cost was between \$150,000 and \$160,000, which he believes would be approximately \$75,000 less than other alternatives. It would be cheaper and more efficient fuel wise as well. He felt everyone needed think a little bit out of the box to not just of where to put parking or how to put parking but to think of what could be done for the residents of Newark who clearly love coming downtown.

Mr. Clifton commented on the tiered peak rates and encouraged it but also thought it important to not create a deterrent to keep people from coming downtown. Looking at the parking holistically was a wonderful thing.

Mr. Clifton wanted to also address Lot 5. It was purchased \$450,000 to \$475,000 years ago and was currently rented it out. An original conversation for the lot was to have satellite parking for

employees who work downtown. He felt it needed to be looked at again. It was provided in the draft report on one side it was a misconception that if someone would not park right in front of the business then it was not convenient. He felt that it was not asking a lot to provide a satellite lot for the employees to free up the parking spaces in the lots for patrons.

Mr. Markham was glad to see the University would be included in the application. In terms of “decoupling” he felt there would still be a significant number of students that would bring a car. He noted that some apartments provided two spots and a third person has found a place to park. Mr. Markham thought maybe it was just the outer edges of downtown with more space at a lesser cost and felt that there would need to be a mix.

Mr. Markham stated he would like to see a free time during the variable parking times such as the summer time when there would be less activity. People could come and discover what Newark has to offer.

Mr. Markham asked if there was anything pertaining to electronic payment options. Something similar to an EZ-Pass electronic payment system.

Mr. Markham advised that staff needed to be very clear on how they present the “decoupling” idea. It was a discussion worth having to explain the advantages and the disadvantages because there already seemed to be a division amongst the group. Ms. Gray stated this was one of the many reasons why staff looked to have an analysis of the parking ordinances and regulations be a twostep, two-year process with a consultant. The consultant would review what Newark has done and what other entity have done to learn from other jurisdictions to see what has worked well and what has not. Mr. Markham wanted to know for sure if “decoupling” really could bring down the rent because that would be the biggest positives. People in the City would not have to pay a premium to live in the City.

Mr. Markham asked if the plan to bring in other lots and businesses was to make the City responsible to manage them. Ms. Gray said the plan would be to partner with private lots. Mr. Markham asked if there would be some type of incentive for the businesses to participate. Ms. Gray stated one idea would a cost share plan where the City would share a portion of the revenue. Mr. Markham stated the reason why they have parking would be because they provide free parking to their customers. He did not want to bring up voucher systems or free parking for their employees but somehow it would have to deal with what they get now and receive more. Mr. Markham felt that staff would need to convince the business how it would still be good idea.

Mr. Markham wanted to know if this would deal with the parking permits in the lots because if staff was trying to encourage turnover, then maybe that system should just go away. It should be available to anyone versus one person buying a pass for a whole year. Ms. Gray stated it was part of the parking management issue to review permit system. Mr. Coleman stated it would be an included topic at the next meeting. Mr. Coleman explained that some of the permits were an obligation per the lease agreements with the different property owners for the public lots and those leases had been centralized to Lot 2. Mr. Coleman was not sure of the exact number, but the permits were all located in Lot 2. Many of the spots become vacant at night and staff planned to discuss how to take advantage of the vacant spots. Mr. Markham suggested that once a system was put into place for Lot 2, that system should be used for all the lots. Mr. Coleman stated Lot 2 would be the pilot.

Mr. Markham echoed Mr. Clifton’s thought of a transportation plan to have people brought in, like a park-n-ride type of system.

Mr. Morehead stated much of the plan was based off best practice for places which have transit systems. Until a transit system existed, he did not think the City could do some of the things presented. Newark cannot pretend to be a big city with the density. He found many of the assertions that “walkable” would mean more value to the individual properties. What has happened was a different causality that “walkable” was a side effect of higher density and the higher density directly drove the higher value as the rules of supply and demand. Mr. Morehead liked the 24/7 permit going to a permit when needed. He liked if someone were to use it for transit and if someone was to use it for work that would be a different hourly rate and the idea to move to a “pay to play” based rate where the first hour might be free. Someone could come downtown and park and then decided to stay longer, then a fee would start to incur. This might settle some issues as there was a lot of unhappiness when the City moved to a whole hour parking where the next minute over the last hour become a whole hour and the change may help people feel better about that.

Mr. Morehead addressed an earlier business plan which would ask the question “Who is the customer?” Mr. Morehead wanted staff to look at and know the answers to goals such as incenting turnover or incenting visitors or employees.

Mr. Morehead stated “decoupling” had already happened. Especially with restaurant lots but that was only half scale from the same thought process for residential developments. The City requires the developments to have spaces not for the spaces to be free. Mr. Morehead stated the issue with Taverna Restaurant and Iron Hill Brewery where that they were private properties and the City does not have control over the spaces. It needed to be clear that if parking requirements were to be cleared that, that would not be “decoupling”.

Mr. Morehead enjoyed the use of the “Nights and Weekends” program with the University of Delaware. He had used the Pearson Lot which was immediately behind the driveway between Taverna and Washington House. It was the best deal because a person had the ability to sign up to five license plates however, only one license plate can show up at one time. It was very simple and could be set up online. He felt that if the City did not push the knowledge that the University has this program and questioned why the City was not doing those types of programs. Ms. Gray stated it was on the parking map, explained that the program linked right to the University’s site and as part of the marketing strategy would also be promoted. Mr. Morehead thought that was a move in the right direction as well as the Wayfind signs, because there was more parking available than what has been said. He felt the City had promoted its own problem in this case and that it was better to do the easy stuff first instead of building a garage first. He believed a parking garage was not the answer.

Ms. Wallace agreed with much that had been said. Staff need to remember daytime employee parking when developing that segment. Ms. Wallace stated her understanding of “decoupling” was not going to happen to just retail locations but also locations such as Easton Apartments which has a separate rate for parking. The data on all of those spaces were full, did it work to reduce the number of cars and any other examples of residential “decoupling” around the area.

Ms. Wallace thought it was very important to recognize that the City did not have an integrated transit system yet. Since one does not exist, some of the solutions offered to be ineffective.

Ms. Wallace echoed Mr. Morehead thought which she believed to be important. The report missed looking at how the different suggestions would impact the various customers such as residents, tourists, University students, and those associated with various businesses and the University. Ms. Wallace thought there could be a benefit to develop a matrix based on the customers and how the various policy could impact them negatively or positively.

Ms. Wallace stated this was brought up before with making these types of changes to parking, this would be a fundamental shift in who pays for parking. Right now, a mix exists of private developers and property owners being responsible for parking but if all the changes were to be made the shift would go from individual property owners, private developers and business to the City of Newark. Which would be the residents of Newark, the taxpayers and the utility payers. Ms. Wallace thought it was important to make sure that the public would agree and see it as a benefit to them since they would bear the brunt of policy changes. If the City were able to convince the business owners to allow the City to manage the lots, there would be more cost to the taxpayers and utility payers see it as a benefit. It would be a big shift to shift the financial burden. Everyone needed to understand, talk about and all be on board as well as the public.

Mr. Coleman stated he envisioned for the program for the City to manage a private lot for an owner where the owner would be in a contractual agreement that would at least cover the City’s cost to manage the lot. The plan would not shift any burden to the General Fund. Ms. Wallace said if there were to be an increase in shuttles, building a parking garage and to bring more parking online. This would be a buy-in where the City would be the manager of the parking as opposed to the piecemeal system that currently exists. The current system may not be working as well as it could but the people who would have to pay for a new system must be onboard and understand the benefit for them.

Mr. Hamilton thanked Mr. Morehead who brought up a lot of important details and the attempt at a winning partnership with the University of Delaware as far as the lot rentals. Mr. Hamilton would like to have the City place it upfront on the City’s webpage instead of the City’s parking page because he felt it was underutilized.

Mr. Hamilton stated he liked to listen to experts and to Mr. Krawchuk from the University. Mr. Hamilton said he had attended numerous meetings regarding parking’s discussions regarding the

University's parking. He believed the University seemed to be buying into the "land in prime location" for parking and they plan to eliminate parking when they build the South College dorms and the Biden Institute. He believed employees have asked where they would park and have asked for a parking garage. Mr. Hamilton believed the University said no to the parking garage because garages were expensive to build and maintain. Mr. Hamilton posed the question that if parking was not a high priority for the University to use land in a prime location, then why should it be a high priority for the City. Mr. Hamilton then read from a part of the report and Ms. Gray interjected. She stated it was a suggestion to look at feasibility after staff had reviewed other parking management strategies. A parking garage was not the ultimate goal of the plan it was an aspect to be looked at and investigated. Mr. Coleman added that it was a matter of having tried everything else, see if the problem still existed and then think about a parking garage. Ms. Sierer stated she agreed with it being part of the research in the development of the strategy and did not mean it would be something they would do. Mr. Hamilton felt that if \$20 million were to be used to build a parking garage, why not use those funds on public transportation as there was recently a missed opportunity to put in a bus lane.

Mr. Hamilton said he spoke with a Planning Commission member who he stated said he absolutely believed a parking garage was needed and it would be the responsibility of the City to provide parking. Mr. Hamilton advised at the meeting prior, there were two or three properties which provided more parking than what the City's code required. One of those properties planned to build a parking garage. He thought "someone" was not getting the message. Mr. Hamilton also recently spoke with a developer who stated the hardest properties to lease were those without parking. He would like to eliminate parking to not have a large number of cars downtown, but it seemed as if many of the ideas such as "decoupling" were already happening. He did not believe the City needed the parking garage and hopefully it would not be needed by the estimate timeframe.

Mr. Hamilton echoed Ms. Wallace's comment about how it felt as though there was a push to take the parking problem and potentially put it on the City which would take it away from the private owners. Mr. Hamilton would like to see where leases were proposed to be 99-year leases because the current leases seem to put the City into trouble. He did not want to continue with the uncertainty of having 5-year leases which he felt had contributed to the current parking issue. He loved and supported the suggestions regarding low hanging fruit, the sign and the webpage. Mr. Hamilton asked if anyone in attendance was part of the subcommittee of a business where they paid for their parking and asked if anyone had that problem. He explained that they had heard from some of the business owners and employees had stated parking was expensive. Mr. Mikles stated his business does pay the expense for their employees. Mr. Hamilton thanked Mr. Mikles and appreciated him paying for their employees. He wanted to have someone first hand because when he heard in subcommittees and hinted at the cost of parking he heard a lot of suggestions that the price of parking would go up and he was ok with that personally but would like to have it spelled out because he heard resistance from the Council talking about employees needing lower cost parking. He wanted in the end a balance to be found because a lot of the equipment was expensive and did not want to see the City have a decrease in the revenue. He did not believe in helping a particular area pay for parking if it was not for the whole City.

Mr. Hamilton asked the cost to obtain a permit to park in Lot 2 and if the permits were grandfathered. Mr. Coleman stated permits cost \$1,000 per year and that grandfathered permits were part of the discussions about how to manage those permits moving forward as some were associated with leases. Mr. Howard explained that most of the permits in Lot 2 were leased to merchants or to lease agreements. Mr. Hamilton asked if new businesses had the same opportunity. Mr. Howard stated when new businesses come in staff tries to provide them with two spots. Currently, Lot 2 with 71 spots was maxed out by merchants. Mr. Howard said Lot 5 has stayed rented out. Hertz Rental Car Company had about 23 spots, Klondike Kate's through a lease agreement has 30 spots. Lot 4, an hourly lot had 15 spots over Lot 5 which was a distance away. It had a total of 80 spots there, staff tries to get merchants in there first. Staff then sells permits on a "first come first serve" basis and customer has the option to maintain it. Mr. Hamilton stated then that was another grandfathered situation. He asked if Hertz had 85 employees where Mr. Howard stated Hertz had 20 parking spots. Mr. Hamilton asked if Hertz had 20 employees. Mr. Howard stated the spots were used for the business's rental cars. Mr. Hamilton said then the lot was being used for other purposes and that could be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Hamilton asked that when staff hoped decreased pricing, was there an actual study in any city to support that or was it just theoretical. Ms. Gray staff did not move forward with this approach because it was not approved yet, but it was the intent to see how other entities price for comparison to see what would make sense. Ms. Gray added that was one of the advantages to get a consultant with nationwide exposure.

Mr. Hamilton hoped that the parking study would help them decide if there really was a parking problem which had been a question for years. Also, some of the larger suggestions seemed to be changes fit for a city with a more robust transportation system. He would hate to be stuck with a decision 15 years from now which could place the City in a different position of overcrowding with more cars trying to find a place to park and then the City be forced to a certain direction with the elimination of parking.

Mr. McIntosh wanted to address the last comment. He stated the subcommittee had strongly recommended to move the employee parking away from prime spaces to remote spaces. The University of Delaware had offered inexpensive space, but it would not be easily accessible to downtown by walking. In the presentations prior it was discussed on how to have some sort of transportation to circle into that lot and more importantly to do so late at night. The objective would be to make sure more spaces would be available for whoever wants to come downtown with the idea to shift people away from the prime spots into less expensive spots. However, it would carry an obligation to take care of them late at night to cover the safety issue.

Mr. McIntosh was glad that Ms. Wallace brought up the idea of “Who is the customer?”. It was an excellent idea and he was not sure if staff had investigated that specifically to find out who would benefit from the changes. The hope would be that everyone would benefit from it.

Mr. McIntosh stated he was not an expert on “decoupling” but having it as an option would give the potential to have less cars coming into the city.

Mr. McIntosh hoped it was clear that the whole program was a holistic approach. The larger recommendations at the end were placed there purposefully. If staff would be allowed to do what they thought they could do with the low hanging fruit, then maybe there would be no need for a parking garage. He stated that he did not have an opinion one way or another regarding a parking garage. He did not think the Planning Commission could bring to Council a plan that did not include suggestion for a parking garage. Planning Commission had considered the possibility of a parking garage early in the process and did not want to be construed as if they considered it as an afterthought.

Mr. McIntosh stated the bus was an expensive option, but it was something the community could use and use effectively over time. The trolley had some problems, but he was not going to speak about them. He spoke about a well comprehensive thought out bus system for the community which many communities used. All these things would bring more people into the City, make them feel good about coming here, and staying to shop. There was no guarantee about anything but there was a lot of hard work from some very well-meaning intelligent people which led the subcommittee to the conclusion brought before the Council. Taken again as a whole it would be the solution from the subcommittee’s point of view.

Mr. Silverman believed the value of the City was to manage the information about the location of parking and allowing the marketplace to respond. Downtown currently had a shuttle as part of the City’s agreement with Springhill Suites. They maintain a shuttle as part of their parking waiver requirement. As that demand evolves, he would speculate the private sector would come together with sponsorship with advertisement on the side of shuttles. Mr. Silverman asked for Council to keep in mind the transportation route. The University of Delaware reported on their transportation system handled over 1.1 million passengers in a single year and managed 9,000 parking spaces against the relatively several hundred that the City managed. The City does have a major transportation system in but there was a disconnect as to whether that transportation system was available to the public. With respect to remote employee parking he has viewed the buses riding around with a driver and several students and asked how they could justify that. He spoke with some of his colleagues who work for the University. He found that University employees were parking in the most remote locations with the lowest price and utilize the University’s shuttle bus. The system was already in place and they need to make a link to have the City residents and the guests coming into the City be able to access that resource.

Mr. Silverman added that in reference to “decoupling” there was a major property manager in the City who owns property along Main Streets who has been in business for a very long time. They own properties with the infamous parking waiver when there was extremely limited parking available to their locations. There were properties to be considered in the prime rental market locations. They could be rented relatively easily without parking being available onsite at the backdoor next to the elevator next to the bike rack.

Mr. Locke touched on Mr. Clifton’s idea about the trolley. A suggestion would be for the trolley to be available on Fridays and Saturdays during the summer time and rent it out to see if the residents use. It would be inexpensive, and it would be a good way to monitor it as a 90-day trial. Regarding

“decoupling” in his conversations, the value was with where there were buildings with parking underneath that could be converted into rental space for commercial tenants and retail offices. The spaces rented to Hertz for them to keep inventory of their rental cars should stop. The City has a need for those spaces which then could take pressure off the remaining lots. He had already expressed his opinion that Lot 2 was the most valuable lot in the City, and it must be rearraigned. With Klondike Kate’s 30 spots it also seems to be an unfair advantage for one business over the other the others. Mr. Locke believed that if a parking garage would come 2 to 3 years from now it probably would not be a public parking lot. It would probably be a quasi public-private venture or private venture by itself as the economics entail.

John Morgan, District 1, was grateful for the public to have an opportunity to provide input with the Parking Subcommittee and agreed with at least 80% of the recommendations made. He disagreed with getting rid of the minimum requirements for parking. He performed his own count of spots during the summer of 2016 with the help of Katie Gifford and found that the City, at that time, had no shortage of parking that could not be solved by simply raising the rates to Lot 1 to match the University’s rates during the time of peak occupancy from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday during the Spring and Fall semesters. He wondered why there was so much pressure to build a parking garage in Lot 1. It did occur to him that the biggest beneficiary would be the owner of the land which was being rented to the City at a very low rate behind Main Street for Lot 3 and Lot 4. If the City did build a large parking garage in Lot 1 that would make it much easier for the owners of that land where Lot 3 and Lot 4 could cancel the leases and build multistory apartment buildings for students. He was glad that the developers of the hotel would build a large parking structure as part of it.

Mr. Morgan then wanted to address some comments from the table such as the offer to provide free parking whether it would be free in the summer or free for the first hour. He wanted it to be kept in mind that the University of Delaware has 4,000 employees of which at least 3,000 would be here year round. Also, roughly several thousand students stay year-round. If free parking was offered in the summer in City lots, he felt that they would fill up and not be available for people coming into the City. If the first hour were to be free it needed to be kept in mind that there were Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes at the University only last 50 minutes each. Some people may work the system where they leave the lot prior to the end of the free parking to move out of the lot and then move back in for another free hour. Mr. Morgan thought the City should continue with the first 10 minutes being free and maybe change it to the first 30 minutes free. The shorter trips of people making into town would mean more traffic and that would need to be reviewed as well.

Helga Huntley, District 1, thought overall a lot of good work has gone into the plan. Her main concern was that there were some suggestions which seemed to be aimed at reducing the total parking supply. Such as eliminating parking requirements and the increase of public transit to discourage car use. Other proposals seem to increase the parking supply such as leases with private lots. She wanted to know what the vision was. Did the City want more parking downtown or less? Neither goal can be reached without deciding on one or the other. There needed to be clarification by adopting this plan. Was the idea that there would be items to be considered or has the City committed itself to any of the steps. Mr. Coleman stated basically everything would come back to Council for consideration.

Ms. Huntley questioned if the elimination of parking requirements while at the same time as working towards providing more parking by the City would shift the cost of parking from the developers onto the taxpayers. That would seem to be counterproductive to “decoupling”. Because then people who rent apartments have parking spots subsidizing and people who do not live in these apartment buildings would also be subsidizing parking spots.

Ms. Olsen stated the University did have an application with their kiosks called a “Passport” application since 2016. If there were any questions about the applications for pros and cons, people were instructed to reach out to Ms. Olsen to get connected with the correct people to figure out what they like about it and what they do not. The same could be done with the bus application called the “UD Shuttle” application. It showed bus locations on a map and could send out a text when buses were close. There was a meeting recently with ACOM and the City’s parking departments where it was decided to create a daily routes and weekends pass for people who may want to come once versus someone who would be in the City all the time. The University also had all day parking for about \$6 at the garages which leads again to marketing. There were conversations about creating flyers to be dispersed to managers of restaurants so they could hand them out to employees. Also discussed were permits for construction workers and sublet parking.

Mr. Clifton asked if Ms. Olsen had any knowledge regarding the buses that loop East and West because months ago someone made the comment about the buses being State funded and that the public should be able to ride the buses and thought was that Ms. Olsen may have found something different.

Ms. Olsen explained that the University does not technically charge so it was not the same as a DART or a public bus and that was one reason why they were not available yet. Ms. Olsen stated she was working on something but could not make any promises. Some of the issues were legal, insurance and safety based.

Jean White, District 1, stated she did not see the things as broadly as the group, even though she did attend most of the meetings which were interesting. She had a surprise going to a business on Main Street where she used to have trouble finding a parking spot where on this one trip, she found the lot to be half empty. Part of the lot was located behind Iron Hill Brewery and the other behind Cameras Etc.. The part behind Iron Hill Brewery had signs in places that showed it would cost \$2 an hour to park. The other side did not have such a system but did have signs to divide into two which stated that if the person was not patronizing one of the businesses then the vehicle would be towed. She was not sure how they enforced it or if they would enforce, but there were plenty of parking places now. The other thing was that she did not know how it could be done but the DART transit hub between the Newark Shopping Center and Newark High School should have two metered parking places.

Ms. White asked that if the Springhill Suites Hotel lot was so empty, could it have less parking with the condition or understanding that if their lot started to fill up all the time then they could pave over the part where they had grass because if it was mostly full it would be a more imperviously surface.

Mr. Coleman stated some of the comments made him feel that items may not have been explained well enough. The market for parking was distorted by having the requirement that to build at any location in the City, that the building no matter the height would need to have a certain amount of parking. Eliminating the parking minimum would allow the developer to build what their analysis states. He disagreed with the thought the City “backed” itself into having to build a garage. The City had a demand for parking, and he believed the elimination of parking minimums, the “decoupling” and the other creative solutions would reduce the liability on the City.

Mr. Coleman added that he would not sign a lease that would shift risk onto the City. The idea would be a public private partnership like the proposal for Lot 1. It would be a profit-sharing agreement, or an agreement structured in such a way that the City would not assume risk.

Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Howard how much money was earned from Lot 1. Mr. Howard stated it grossed \$665,000 last year. Mr. Coleman believed more could be earned by a ground lease. He felt it was a discussion to have with thoughts to make Lot 1 a public private partnership to allow. A developer could build something on the ground, the City would be paid or what the current gross amount being made now and get an efficient use of the land that would also generate tax and utility revenue. Parking would never be the most efficient use for the City unless the market were to dictate a charge like Philadelphia where a flat fee of \$20 would be charged, no matter the length of time on the lot. The vision would be for the City to work with private lot owners to efficiently manage their parking so that the City could efficiently use the parking that existed today.

Ms. Sierer stated she would entertain a Motion as presented in the packet regarding the Parking Policy Matrix timeline and cost. Mr. Morehead asked for a conversation about the vote.

Mr. Coleman stated the general thought about the vote was to give staff the confidence to move forward to start the efforts outlined. Such as developing an RFP for a parking consultant and a marketing consultant. Last year Council asked staff to put together the implementation strategy. He mentioned earlier that almost everything in the plan would have to come back to Council in some way or another. Either in the budget except for the things already approved in the budget for this year. The following would come back to Council because the cost would be over the \$25,000 threshold:

- The two consultants
- Capital Expenses
- Ordinances

Mr. Coleman stated staff did not want items to show up without Council giving the direction to work on them. Mr. Morehead asked what was new from what was voted on in November because the chart was already voted on and Council asked for more information because he felt the same information had been presented. Ms. Gray stated the report and the Parking Policy Matrix were put on the agenda to Council back in the first or second meeting in January but was not officially presented to Council. What was presented to Council on June 25th was the parking strategy report and then staff was tasked to put together the narrative, timeline and matrix. Ms. Sierer added the meeting was tabled back in January. Ms. Gray stated the meeting was specifically tabled to have this meeting because Mr. Morehead had said

it was too much information to look at and to have a discuss during that Council meeting and suggested a separate meeting.

MOTION BY MR. MARKHAM, SECONDED BY MR. CLIFTON: TO APPROVE THE STAFF TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION PARKING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT AND POLICY MATRIX 2, 2018 AND TO DIRECT STAFF TO MOVE FORWARD TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6 to 1.

Aye – Clifton, Hamilton, Lawhorn, Markham, Sierer, Wallace
Nay – Morehead

3. Meeting adjourned at 11:58 p.m.

Tara Schiano
Acting City Secretary

/dmp